

U.S. EMBASSY OTTAWA, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION
Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
The 2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF)

The Embassy of the United States in Canada announces an open competition for past participants (“alumni”) of U.S. government-funded and U.S. government-sponsored exchange programs to submit applications to the 2022 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF 2022). We seek proposals from teams of at least two alumni that meet all program eligibility requirements below. Exchange alumni interested in participating in AEIF 2022 should submit proposals to AlumniCanada@state.gov by one of two submission deadlines. The first deadline is February 18, 2022; the second is April 20, 2022.

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

AEIF provides alumni of U.S. sponsored and facilitated exchange programs with funding to expand on skills gained during their exchange experience to design and implement innovative solutions to global challenges facing their community. Since its inception in 2011, AEIF has funded nearly 500 alumni-led projects (including three in Canada in the last two years) around the world through a competitive global competition.

This year, AEIF 2022 will support United States’ commitment to a renewed partnership with Canada, as outlined in President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau’s Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada partnership.

U.S. Embassy Ottawa will accept public service projects proposed and managed by teams of at least two (2) alumni that support themes such as:

- Combatting COVID-19
- Building Back Better
- Accelerating Climate Ambitions
- Advancing Diversity and Inclusion
- Bolstering Security and Defense
- Building Global Alliances
- Advancing Democracy

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Announcement posted: January 31, 2022.

Closing date for applications: first submission deadline: February 18, 2022; second deadline: April 20, 2022.

Funding type: Small grant awards.

Decision date: no later than May 31, 2022.

Expected size of individual awards: Between US\$10,000 to US\$40,000.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in 24 months or less.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

Eligible Applicants:

The following individuals are eligible to apply:

- Applicants must be alumni of a U.S. government-funded exchange program (<https://alumni.state.gov/list-exchange-programs>) or a U.S. government-sponsored exchange program (<https://j1visa.state.gov/>).
- Projects teams must include teams of at least two (2) alumni.
- Alumni who are U.S. citizens may not submit proposals, but U.S. citizen alumni may participate as team members in a project.
- Alumni teams may be comprised of alumni from different exchange programs and different countries.
- Applications must be submitted by exchange alumni. Not-for-profit, non-governmental organizations, think tanks, and academic institutions are not eligible to apply in the name of the organization but can serve as partners for implementing project activities.

Cost Sharing

Inclusion of cost share is not a requirement of this opportunity.

Grant Program Area:

Proposals must address the following themes: indicated in the program description (Section A). Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program description will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

- Combatting COVID-19
- Building Back Better
- Accelerating Climate Ambitions
- Advancing Diversity and Inclusion
- Bolstering Security and Defense
- Building Global Alliances
- Advancing Democracy

Proposals that do not address the theme as outlined in the program objectives will be deemed ineligible. All project activities must take place outside of the United States and its territories.

Other Eligibility Requirements

If the grant will be processed with an individual, that individual is not required to have a DUNS number or be registered in SAM.gov. However, should the grant be processed with an organization that is a partner in the project, that organization must have a unique entity identifier (Data Universal Numbering System/DUNS number from Dun & Bradstreet), as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Organizations must have a commitment to equal opportunity employment practices and to non-discrimination practices with regard to beneficiaries, without regard to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.

Applicants are only allowed to submit **one** proposal.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Address to Request Application Package

Application and budget templates are available here:

- [2022 AEIF Proposal Form](#)
- [2022 AEIF Budget Form](#)

Content and Form of Application Submission

Applications and budgets must be submitted using the official AEIF 2022 proposal and budget forms. Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity.
- The proposal addresses all questions in the official AEIF 2022 proposal form.
- All documents are in English.
- The budget is in U.S. dollars and is submitted using the designated AEIF budget form.
- All pages are numbered.

The following documents are required:

Mandatory application forms

- [2022 AEIF Proposal Form](#)
- [2022 AEIF Budget Form](#)

Successful applicants will be required to complete additional mandatory grant application forms that will be provided at a later stage.

Project Team Information: At least two exchange alumni team members are required for a project to be considered for funding. Applications need to provide the name and contact information, describe the role each team member will have in the project, and their experience, qualifications, and ability to carry out that role. Applicants need to indicate what proportion of the team member's time will be used in support of the project.

Proposal Summary: A short narrative which outlines the proposed project, including challenge/s to be addressed, project objectives, and anticipated impact.

Project Goals and Objectives: The goal/s of the proposed project need to describe what the project is intended to achieve and include the objectives which support the goal/s. Objectives should be specific, measurable, and realistically achievable in a set time frame.

Project Methods, Design, and Timeline: A description of how the project is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal/s. This should include a description of the project's direct and indirect beneficiaries as well as a plan on how to continue the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable. The proposed timeline for the project activities should include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events. Applicants may also submit proposed workshop or training agendas and materials

Local Project Partners: A list of partners who will support the proposed project, if applicable.

Communication Plan: The communication plan should include a communication and outreach strategy for promoting the proposed project. It may include social media,

websites, print news, or other forms of media intended to use to share information about the project to beneficiaries and the public. Communications should include AEIF 2022, Exchange Alumni, and U.S. Embassy branding.

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The Monitoring and Evaluation component of the proposal should outline in detail how the proposal's activities will advance the program's goals and objectives. This should include any outcomes showing a change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will measure the impact of planned activities. A strong proposal will include:

- Any outcomes the grantee expects to occur because of their program. Outcomes could include: change in knowledge, awareness, and attitudes; improved quality of services; increased capacity at a school, group; etc. Proposals should also include how the grantee will know those outcomes are occurring (surveys, interviews, observations, etc.)
- For example: If the program expects that a teacher-training program will improve the skills of a teacher, a proposal may explain the skills the teacher would gain and plan to perform a survey before the program and a survey following the program that would show a change in understanding due to the program.
- A plan to include the grantee's reflection of how their program contributed to the program's goals. As applicable, a strong final report would include success stories, behaviors changed, lessons learned, and results obtained.

Budget Justification Narrative: Applicants must submit a detailed budget and budget narrative justification utilizing the template provided. Line-item expenditures should be listed in the greatest possible detail. Budgets shall be submitted in U.S. dollars and final grant agreements will be conducted in U.S. dollars.

AEIF 2022 can support the following:

- Intra-regional or in-country transportation
- Rental of venues for project activities
- PPE and sanitizing equipment
- Meals/refreshments integral to the project (i.e., working lunch for a meeting)
- Reasonable costs to support virtual programming (i.e., subscription to Zoom, WebEx, camera/microphones for virtual meetings, mailing services, etc.)
- Trainer or speaker honoraria expenses (i.e., maximum \$200/day fee, travel, lodging, per diem)
- Reasonable equipment and materials
- Communications and publicity materials, such as manuals or project advertisements

Budget Restrictions: AEIF 2022 does not support the following activities or costs, and the selection committee will deem applications involving any of these activities or costs ineligible:

- Any airfare to/from the United States and its territories
- Activities that take place in the United States and its territories
- Staff salaries, office space, and overhead/operational expenses
- Large items of durable equipment or construction programs
- Alcohol, excessive meals, refreshments, or entertainment
- Academic or scientific research
- Charitable or development activities
- Provision of direct social services to a population
- Individual scholarships
- Social travel/visits
- Gifts or prizes
- Duplication of existing programs
- Institutional development of an organization
- Venture capital, for-profit endeavors, or charging a fee for participation in project
- Support for specific religious activities
- Fund-raising campaigns
- Support or opposition of partisan political activity or lobbying for specific legislation

E. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

Evaluation Criteria: The U.S. Embassy Ottawa Public Affairs Section will use the criteria outlined below to evaluate all applications. The proposals will be reviewed by a Selection Committee made up of regional and exchange program experts located at the Department of State in Washington, DC. Panelists will use the criteria below to review and evaluate applications.

Relevance to Application Theme

The proposal provides sufficient information on how the activities will support the theme(s) of the competition. The narrative explains any relevant local context the D.C. Selection Committee may not be aware of in relation to this project. Proposed project ideas must be public diplomacy in nature (i.e., not development or military).

Purpose and Summary, Description, and Implementation Plan

When developing the purpose, summary, description, and implementation plan, applicants should aim to make all descriptions clear, concise, and compelling.

Reviewers will judge the proposals based on the likelihood for the project to exert a sustained, powerful influence on the community where it is undertaken. Does the project address an important gap of understanding or need? If the aim of the project is achieved, how will existing knowledge or practice be improved? What audience do the applicants hope to reach with this project? How many will participate? How will they be selected?

Degree of Alumni Involvement

Projects must include the involvement of at least two (2) exchange alumni. They may be the project team leaders or collaborate directly with PAS in formulating the project. More than two alumni may comprise the team, however, the minimum is two. As the team leaders, the alumni must be closely involved in project planning, implementation, etc. Applicants should ensure that the proposal includes the following information for each alumni team member: first name, last name, e-mail address, exchange program, country of citizenship, and roles and responsibilities.

Participation and Support from Local Partners

The proposal demonstrates buy-in and support from the community where the project will take place. Local partner involvement is a strong sign that there is community support and that the project will engage a broad array of experts, such as subject matter experts, community centers, academic institutions, businesses, local/national government, non-governmental organizations, American Spaces, etc.

Evaluation and Impact of the Project

A monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan is pivotal to project implementation and important tracking progress towards the project's objectives and goals. An M&E plan should consider the data needed to effectively monitor progress toward specific outputs and outcomes as well as how that data collection will be accomplished. Well-crafted indicators should be used to understand a program's progress toward the desired results. An M&E plan should be reviewed for the following:

- Completion
- Applicability and logic of objectives and indicators
- Clear approach to monitoring
- Adherence to SMART criteria
- Feasibility of baselines and targets
- Data quality plan
- Capacity to implement plan

Sustainability

Have the applicants considered how the project will continue to have positive impact after the end of the project.

Communication, Media, and Outreach Plan

The project should include a clear plan and timeline for how and when the team will

share information about the project. It is important to ensure that the U.S. Embassy gets recognition throughout the process, if circumstances permit.

Budget and Budget Narrative

The budget and narrative justification are sufficiently detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities. The results and proposed outcomes justify the total cost of the project. Budget items are reasonable, allowable, and allocable.

Disclaimer: This notice is subject to availability of funding. U.S. Embassy Ottawa does not guarantee availability of funding by receiving applications under this announcement. Only successful applicants will be contacted.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

The grant award will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document, and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method: Payments will be made in Canadian dollars to a Canadian bank account via electronic fund transfer, in allotments mutually pre-determined between the grantee and the Grants Officer. U.S. Embassy Ottawa maintains the right to withhold final payment until receipt of the closing grant reports.

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. Closing reports are due within 120 days of the grant's end date.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contacts

Questions about the grant application process should be directed to:
AlumniCanada@state.gov.